

(c) and (d) NTPC will take steps to obtain necessary clearances and commitments in respect of availability of land, water, no objection from State Pollution Control Board, the State Government and other agencies after techno-economic feasibility of the proposed power plant is established and its location is finalised.

Expansion of rural roads

*166. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to expand the rural roads through the Prime Minister's Rural Road Programme; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU): (a) and (b) Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana has been launched on 25th December, 2000 to provide road connectivity in the rural areas of the country. The Programme envisages connecting all Habitations with a population of over 1,000 persons, through good, all-weather roads, by the year 2003 and those with a population of more than 500 persons, by the year 2007. In addition to providing connectivity to about one lakh Habitations, the Programme also aims to upgrade, to specifications, about 5 lakh kilometres of existing Rural Roads.

The requisite Guidelines in this regard, for the year 2000-2001, have been communicated to the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations.

Losses in power sector

*167. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 40 per cent of the total electricity produced in the country is wasted in the form of transmission and distribution and out of the remaining 60 per cent, 20 per cent electricity is stolen;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that the country suffers a loss of Rs. 37,000 crores every year in the power sector; and

^tOriginal notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) if so, the steps being taken by Government to improve the power sector?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SURESH PRABHU): (a) to (c) On all India basis, metered supply accounts for about 40% of the energy sent out by the generating stations. In most States, the supply to the agricultural sector for irrigation pump-sets and to households below poverty level are not metered. The loss sustained during transmission and transformation stage accounts for about 25%, according to the figures reported by the State Power Utilities. The balance 35% includes supply to unmetered category and losses due to theft/pilferage.

Theft of energy has been made a cognizable offence under the Indian Electricity Act, 1910. Guidelines for Energy Audit and for reduction of Transmission & Distribution losses have been issued by the Central Electricity Authority. State Governments/State Power Utilities are being provided funds by the Power Finance Corporation at concessional rates for installation of meters at all levels.

In the Chief Ministers' / Power Ministers' Conference held on 3.3.2001 it was resolved that State Governments/State Power Utilities would take the following steps to reduce technical and commercial losses:—

- (i) Energy audit at all 11 KV feeders will be made effective within the next 6 months and accountability fixed at the local level.
- (ii) An effective Management Information System (M.I.S.) for this purpose will be made operational.
- (iii) On the basis of the above, an effective programme will be launched for identifying and eliminating power thefts in the next 2 years.
- (iv) Full metering of all consumers will be completed by December, 2001.
- (v) The quality of power supplied especially in rural areas will be improved through the APDP.

Under the Accelerated Power Development Programme (APDP), fifty distribution circles have been identified in the first phase for strengthening the distribution system. An Expert Committee has been constituted to assist State Governments/State Power Utilities in the areas of project formulation, implementation and monitoring / evaluation in all the distribution circles. These measures will result in achieving a significant reduction of loss at the distribution stage and will also help in improving the financial health of State Power Utilities.